

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4271

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJ: PRESIDENT VELASCO'S HEALTH

REF: LIMA 2002

1. FAILURE OF PRESIDENT VELASCO TO INAUGURATE UNIDO CONFERENCE FOR REASONS OF "FORCE MAJEURE" REACTIVATED RUMORS AND SPECULATION ON VELASCO'S HEALTH.

2. PRIMEMINISTER MORALES BERMUDEZ, QUERIED BY NEWSMAN AT UNIDO CONFERENCE, SAID THAT A "POSSIBLE" REASON WHY VELASCO DID NOT INAUGURATE CONFERENCE WAS "BECAUSE THE DOCTORS HOPED TO AVOID OVER-EXERTION IN THE STAGE OF RECUPERATION." SEMI-OFFICIAL PAPER LA CRONICA FURTHER QUOTED MORALES BERMUDEZ AS CATEGORIZING VELASCO'S HEALTH AS EXCELLENT. OTHER PAPERS DID NOT CARRY THAT INTERPRETATION. AT SAME TIME MORALES BERMUDEZ ANNOUNCED THAT VELASCO WOULD RECEIVE UN SECGEN WALDHEIM MARCH 13 AT THE VELASCO HOME IN NEARBY CHACLACAYO AND THAT NEWSMEN WOULD THEN HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE VELASCO. MORALES BERMUDEZ ALSO POINTED OUT THAT VELASCO HAD PRESIDED OVER TUESDAY CABINET SESSION.

3. DRING MARCH 12 INTERVIW FOREIGN MINISTER DE LA FLOR TOLD ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND AMBASSADOR THAT PRESIDENT VELASCO "WAS IN A PROCESS OF REST," AND THAT THE CABINET HAD DECIDED AT TUESDAY'S SESSION THAT VELASCO SHOULD NOT OPEN UNIDO CONFERENCE.

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FORMER AMBASSADOR TO U.S. BERCKEMEYER TOLD AMBASSADOR IN COURSE

OF MARCH 12 DINNER AT RESIDENCE THAT COAP CHIEF GENERAL GRAHAM HURTADO HAD TOLD HIM PRESIDENT VELASCO WAS IN SERIOUS CONDITION.

4. COMMENT: MORALES BERMUDEZ REMARKS TO PRESS ON POSSIBLE DOCTORS' DECISION RE VELASCO PARTICIPATION IN UNIDO CONFERENCE SEEM TO CONFLICT WITH DE LA FLOR ACCOUNT OF A CABINET DECISION. WHOEVER VETOED PERFORMANCE PROBABLY DID IT AT LAST MINUTE SINCE MEDIA, INCLUDING LATE MORNING PAPERS, NEVER GOT THE WORD. MEDIA APPROACH TO QUESTION ON MARCH 13 HAS BEEN TO CONCENTRATE ON SPEECH AS A VELASCO PRODUCT AND TO HEADLINE HIS UPCOMING MEETING WITH WALDHEIM.
DEAN

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